

Message Text

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PAGE 01 SAIGON 09750 011317 Z

53

ACTION EA-14

INFO OCT-01 NEA-10 ADP-00 IO-13 ORM-03 SR-02 SS-15 CU-04

VO-03 SCA-01 CIAE-00 DODE-00 INR-10 NSAE-00 PA-03

RSC-01 USIA-12 PRS-01 OC-06 RSR-01 /100 W
----- 096876

R 011035 Z JUN 73

FM AMEMBASSY SAIGON

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 2513

INFO AMEMBASSY KATHMANDU

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E. O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PINT VS

SUBJECT: MRS. NGO BA THANH' S INVITATION FROM COLUMBIA UNIVERSITY

KATHMANDU FOR AMBASSADOR BUNKER

REF: SAIGON 9055

1. MRS. NGO BA THANH' S FAMILY HAS GIVEN US A COPY OF THE LETTER SHE RECEIVED FROM THE DEAN OF COLUMBIA UNIVERSITY LAW SCHOOL INVITING HER TO BE A VISITING SCHOLAR " FOR THE BALANCE OF 19 73." THE INVITATION IS BROADER THAN THE FAMILY ORIGINALLY TOLD US (REFTEL). THEY HAD SAID IT WAS ONLY FOR A LECTURESHIP AT A SHORT SEMINAR IN JUNE.

2. WHILE THE DEAN' S LETTER TO MRS. THANH SAID HE WOULD WRITE DIRECTLY TO THE EMBASSY TO INFORM US OF THE INVITATION, WE STILL HAVE NOT RECEIVED ANY WORD FROM HIM.

3. MRS. THANH HAS WRITTEN TO COLUMBIA, ACCEPTING THE INVITATION. HER LETTER MAKES NO MENTION OF HER CURRENT STATUS. SHE HAD HER FAMILY PASS IT TO THE EMBASSY WITH A COVERING LETTER ASKING THE AMBASSADOR TO FORWARD IT AND TO ASSIST HER WITH " NECESSARY
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PAGE 02 SAIGON 09750 011317 Z

FORMALITIES AND DOCUMENTS FOR TRAVEL TO THE US." WE DECLINED TO TRANSMIT THE REPLY, EXPLAINING THAT POUCH/ APO FACILITIES ARE RESTRICTED TO EMBASSY PERSONNEL. WE SAID THE EMBASSY WILL BE HAPPY TO ACCEPT AND PROCESS HER APPLICATION FOR A VISA. WE ALSO WROTE SUBSTANTIALLY THE SAME THING TO COLUMBIA AND BRIEFLY EXPLAINED HER CURRENT STATUS. COPIES OF ALL CORRESPONDENCE ARE BEING POUCHED TO EA/ VN.

4. ON MAY 31 WASHINGTON POST CORRESPONDENT THOMAS LIPPMAN INFORMED AN EMBASSY OFFICER THAT SOMEONE HAD ANONYMOUSLY LEFT AT HIS OFFICE A ONE- PAGE TYPEWRITTEN " PRESS RELEASE" ON MRS. T LNH' S FROM COLUMBIA. THE RELEASE WAS DETAILED AND APPEARED TO HAVE BEEN WRITTEN IN COLLABORATION WITH HER FAMILY OR CLOSE FRIENDS. THE ONLY INACCURACY WAS A STATEMENT THAT COLUMBIA HAD WRITTEN TO THE EMBASSY " DEMANDING" EMBASSY ASSISTANCE IN GETTING MRS. THANH OUT OF JAIL AND TO THE US. IN RESPONSE TO QUESTIONS THE EMBASSY OFFICER

REPLIED ON BACKGROUND THAT MRS. THANH HAD RECEIVED SUCH AN INVITATION BUT SAID THAT THE EMBASSY HAS RECEIVED NO CORRESPONDENCE FROM COLUMBIA.

IN REPLY TO A QUESTION, HE ALSO SAID WE WOULD ACCEPT MRS. THANH' S APPLICATION FOR A VISA SHOULD SHE MAKE ONE. LIPPMAN SAID HE WAS GOING TO SEE MRS. THANH' S FAMILY ABOUT THE STORY.

5. LIPPMAN' S COPY OF THE PRESS RELEASE APPEARED TO BE A THIRD OR FOURTH CARBON, SUGGESTING THAT OTHER NEWS AGENCIES HERE HAVE RECEIVED IT. HE SAID HE KNOWS THAT A RELATIVE OR VERY KNOWLEDGEABLE FRIND OF MRS . THANH' S HAS CLOSE CONTACT WITH THE AFP BUREAU HERE. (THIS CONFIRMS THE SAME OBVIOUS CONCLUSION WE HAVE DRAWN FROM THE APPEARANCE OF SEVERAL TIMELY AND DETAILED AFP STORIES SINCE HER HUNGER STRIKE BEGAN IN APRIL.)

6. IN CLOSING, LIPPMAN NOTED THAT POLITICAL PRISONERS IS THE ONE TOPIC ABOUT WHICH THE GVN IS MOST SENSITIVE THESE DAYS. HE SAID ALMOST ALL THE FOREIGN JOURNALISTS WHO HAVE GOTTEN INTO HOT WATER WITH THE GVN RECENTLY HAVE DONE SO AS A RESULT OF CRITICAL STORIES ON THIS TOPIC.

7. WE HAVE NOTED THE NEW YORK TIMES MAY 12 STORY ON MOVES AT YALE TO NOMINATE MRS. THANH FOR AN HONORARY LL. B. WE WOULD APPRECIATE NEWS OF FURTHER DEVELOPMENTS ON THIS AS THEY OCCUR.
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PAGE 03 SAIGON 09750 011317 Z

WHITEHOUSE

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NNNNMAFVVZCZ

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*** Current Classification *** LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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Disposition Approved on Date:
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Disposition Date: 28 MAY 2004
Disposition Event:
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Disposition Reason:
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Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
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